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THE AMERICAN MAGAZINE OF ART

AN ILLUSTRATED MONTHLY MAGAZINE

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ART AND THE PEOPLE

Urging the right of our Nation to the heritage of Art, the Honorable Elihu Root once said on the floor of the United States Senate: "The greatest happiness in life comes from things not material. It comes from the elevation of character, from the love of beauty gratified, from the many influences which ennoble mankind." And he added, "I think we have no higher duty than to promote the opening to Americans of every opportunity to secure this means of happiness."

It is with this conviction and in this interest that the American Federation of Arts assembled in Convention in Washington on the 17th, 18th and 19th of the present month. There is no doubt that both the need and opportunities are great. If our Nation is to become one of the great Nations of the world, it must be through a general realization on the part of the people that material prosperity is not the goal of existence. There must be a recognition of the fact that art is not only the interpreter of beauty but a measure of civilization, and should be valued not simply on account of its rarity and marketable worth, but because of its inherent loveliness and inspirational qualities.

The Mediums, or channels, through which the people can be reached are: the schools, the colleges, the public libraries, art museums and associations; through the written and spoken word and by visual

means—exhibitions, pictorial reproductions and permanent public display.

The Schools both public and private furnish numerous opportunities—opportunities which are quite generally being realized. There are comparatively few public schools in the United States in which art is not taught in some form today, and this teaching is not primarily with the object of making artists but rather with the purpose of cultivating taste.

The Colleges, strangely enough, have to a great extent neglected this branch of instruction, there being still a very small number in which instruction in art, looking toward its intelligent appreciation, is given.

The Public Libraries have a twofold opportunity. Many of the newer libraries include in their plan a gallery especially purposed for exhibitions, and provide such, from time to time, for the benefit of the public, as well as books and periodicals dealing with the subject of art. The inception of not a few of our Art Museums has been in one of these Public Library Galleries.

The Art Museums of all the institutions might seem to have in this particular field the largest responsibility, and it is one to which in recent years they have shown themselves fully awake. The Art Museums in this country are no longer committed merely to conservation, but to the contrary are actively reaching out to the people and endeavoring to sow seed which in future generations will bear fruit.

The Press of our country is the great popular medium of communication with the people, and if rightly used would prove powerful in its influence. Besides which there are the mediums of printed books and periodicals for that small fraction of people who are given today to reading and contemplation.

Another great educational factor in this field is the special transient Exhibition—together with which should be considered the great mass of available pictorial material circulated by the so-called "art publishers."

Finally, there are the monumental works, public buildings, private houses, statues, parks, manufactured articles in every-day use, the craftsmen's product—all elements in the every-day life of the people, which

by their very inherent nature are either helpful or detrimental to the cultivation of taste.

How to use these mediums most effectively is the great problem before the thoughtful people of our country today.

The July number of THE AMERICAN MAGAZINE OF ART will be given over chiefly to the consideration of the life and services of the late John W. Alexander, publishing the addresses made at the Memorial Meeting held at the Corcoran Gallery of Art, May 18th, under the auspices of the American Federation of Arts, with reproductions of paintings by Mr. Alexander, many of which will have been included in the Memorial exhibition shown simultaneously in the Corcoran Gallery of Art. It is impossible at so short a range to truly estimate the value of the service which Mr. Alexander rendered, but it is with a deep sense of appreciation and an earnest desire to continue the influence which he so strongly exerted that these tributes have been arranged and will be rendered.

The American Association of Museums holds its annual convention in Washington this year from May 15th to 17th. The American Federation of Arts assembles in convention in the same city from the 17th to 19th. As this magazine goes to press just as these meetings are assembling it is impossible to give more than this brief announcement, but detailed accounts of both meetings will be published in a subsequent issue.

NOTES

ALEXANDER
W. DRAKE

The following beautiful and altogether fitting tribute to the late Alexander W. Drake was written by his long-time associate at the Century Company, Mr. Robert Underwood Johnson, as a letter to, and published in, the *New York Evening Post* of February 8th. It is republished here by special permission:

"I am sure that in the throng that attended the beautiful service for Mr.

Drake at the Church of the Ascension today (Feb. 7th), there were many who would like to say a public word of tribute to the qualities of mind and heart that endeared him to them—qualities which are not usual in themselves and certainly are rare in combination, and which in this instance have gone far to enrich the life of this community and of the whole country.

"I shall not speak of Mr. Drake's service in the promotion of the art of wood-engraving, to which his experiments gave new vitality, and between which and extinction stands the life of our great engraver Timothy Cole and that of one or two worthy associates; or of his exploitation of painting and sculpture by the presentation through the *Century*, in conjunction with Mr. Gilder, of their finest examples. These are already matters of record, and speak for him who never spoke for himself. Enough to say that if we had had, as in France, a National Bureau of Fine Arts, Mr. Drake would have been the one man most fitted, by his ideality and his force of practical administration, to be the director of it.

"I wish to speak only of two points—first, the comprehensiveness, the severity, and the loyalty of his artistic taste. Here was a man who loved beauty as a principle, seeking it out with a gentle enthusiasm of joy, rather than stopping to rail at our abounding ugliness. He made no compromise with the integrity of his exquisite taste; no personal consideration operated to lower his standard, which ran in little things as in great. He felt that if America shall ever attain a classical sense of beauty out of which shall come an era of art of great worth, it will be by a rigid cultivation of taste in every department of life. In his more than forty years of close touch with the artists of his time, while his own sensibilities drew much from them, it is safe to say that he gave more than he received. His feeling for color, proportion and form seemed faultless, and his unrecorded comments on works of art would have made one of those volumes that always seem more precious because they have never been written.

"The other point, which it is wholesome to accentuate, is the constancy and abundance of his personal service. Of those